

THE LOVEDU

1. The Lovedu-tribe took its origin in Mashonaland. Therefore, ¹⁷³ when a Lovedu salutes, they say: "In truth, Lovedu, in truth Khalaga,¹ ⁵⁷⁶ person of Ledaka,² person who comes from Mashonaland!" Further-
more they are "the Pigs of Mohale."³—They say there is the home of the Lovedu.⁴

2. They say the king there had two sons. Now one of them⁵ was ¹⁷³ given the rain.⁶ Afterwards the elder brother desired the thing of the younger one. He went to ask his younger brother for the rain. But the younger brother refused to give him the rain. The elder brother rose against him with spears.⁷ The younger brother escaped southward,⁸ he crossed the Limpopo-river of Mashonaland. On the way they separated into two groups. One tended towards the South and settled at Vyafadi⁹ namely the Mamabolo-tribe. They are also "Pigs¹⁰ of Majati."¹¹

3. Now the Lovedu were looking for a nice country with fertile soil and with ant-hills.¹² They sent the young men in advance to look out for such a country. And indeed—when these passed Vendaland they found the right country having merula-trees and ant-hills in the east of ^[597] the mountain where there is established "Medingen"¹³ to-day—namely at Khumelo.¹⁴

4. They found that there was living another tribe called that of Kheoga.¹⁵ Those people did not know the fire. They ate all their food unboiled. They ate it just like the wild animals.

¹ Name for the inhabitants of Mashonaland.

² See later the praise-names of the kings.

³ Name of chief.

⁴ I was given the following explanation of the word "Lovedu": *Valovedu kha kha kha shaduma go khare: mo kha lovakhho xwile, e lkhho rather is kikhoma le ridga.*—Lovedu means: there where things namely persons, cattle, goats and sheep are being brought as offerings. ^[101]

⁵ The younger one.

⁶ The instruments and formulae to prepare the rain-medicine.

⁷ Chief weapon.

⁸ Literally: upwards.

⁹ Mountains near Haenertsburg.

¹⁰ Lovedu and Mamabolo praise the same animal: the wild pig.

¹¹ See later the praise-names of the kings.

¹² Aam = a delicacy.

¹³ Mission Station.

¹⁴ Name of mountain.

¹⁵ Another Bantu-tribe.

the royal kraal. The children of the chief's kraal are attending school at her command.

37. Chief Khesethwane does not allow that a person enters her kraal with shoes on his feet. When somebody approaches the main entrance, he must take off the shoes and leave them outside the main-entrance that he may be allowed to enter the meeting-place.

The beginning of the government of female chiefs in Loveduland

1. The last male chief is Mogôdô. He had two sons: Malegudu and Khebe. These young men quarrelled about the chieftainship of their father when he was still alive. Now they had a sister who was called Moñaki. So the chieftainship was given her that she might be the ruler of the tribe. The brothers were driven away.

2. When a person is made chief in Loveduland, he must be given the fire-stick and the water-calabash. Now they gave the sister the fire-stick and the calabash that she might bring it to Malegudu, the elder brother. But it is said that they had been strengthened by magic charms which make a person mad who looks at them with his eyes. He will behave like a mad person, he will leave his home, go away and move to another country and dwell there.

3. They say when Malegudu had looked at the fire-stick and the calabash, he left the land of his father, went to Vendaland and died there. Khebe the younger son who had quarrelled with him about the chieftainship was treated in the same way as the elder one. He left the country went to Thôvô²² and died there.

4. So the chieftainship was given the daughter of Mogôdô namely Moñaki I. She had a daughter called Masala-Navô. She followed her mother in the chieftainship.

5. Masala-Navô had no child until her old age. But she had a younger sister. She had two children. The first child was a boy, the second one a girl. The girl-child called Khesethwane was chosen to be chief. She is Moñaki who governs still to-day.

²² In Portuguese-East-Africa.

137 marula tree (*Sideroxylon affre*), from which such delightful cider is
 [272] made. In the distance you hear the hoarse note of a phalaphala horn, then
 the shrill whistles of women. They come nearer. You can hear them
 [303] about the words, 'Malimatshe uwe, Malimatshe uwe; budi ga demole ga
 demole ga falajo, ga owa ephahale' (Malimatshe, Malimatshe, the
 goat I bore, I bore and miscarried, as a gosling I returned)—the praise
 431 song of a district in Zululand. Then at a bend in the road you come upon
 a picturesque procession: in front walks a man, blower of the horn, followed
 by twenty women each with a calabash of beer placed in a basket on her
 head, a gift to the queen from the area of Malimatshe. Perspiration runs
 down their faces; but they do not lose courage, for before they arrive at
 at their destination they will sit down by the roadside to quench their
 thirst from one or two of the calabashes they carry. Any one who then
 happens to pass will beg for a little, and he will not beg in vain.

576 You continue your way. A pigsty and an ash heap mark the approach
 [366] to a village. A passer-by, spying a woman about her household duties,
 shows her greetings, 'Re fiphalele' ('Still our hunger') to which comes the
 reply, 'Fiphalelele zama,' a conventional refusal, but equivalent to 'Be
 hungry nicely' or 'Still your own hunger.' A second woman supplements
 it with the information, 'We have only just put on the pot.' If the find
 had been ready or the woman had wished to give the passer-by a tit-bit,
 the reply would have been, 'Here is food. We are eating.' That one of
 the ways of greeting should be associated with the begging of food is
 typical of the Lovedu. Some one returning from a visit to another area is
 greeted with, 'What are they eating over there,' or 'What are they eating
 us of,' and the reply invariably is, 'They are being killed by hunger,' even
 if there is plenty and you have been royally entertained. There are greet-
 ings associated with activities: if you pass a man or woman working in
 the fields, you say, 'Workers,' and the modest reply is, 'We are hardly
 working at all'; to a woman carrying wood, you say, 'A di coyi dikhanyo'
 ('Let the wood return') and the reply is, 'Di coyile' (It has returned). In
 fact, learning to greet people politely in the Lovedu language is not at all
 the simple thing it is in English.

621 At last you find yourself before the village of Raselaka, larger than any
 789 of those you have passed on the way and, unlike many of them, sur-
 rounded by a thick hedge of thorny *lemphe* bush (*Pterolobium exsuum*).
 At the entrance you trip over a slate-coloured river-stone, jutting out a
 few inches above ground. This is a charm, laid when the village was
 built, to keep out the witches; it makes them cool, causing them to forget
 their evil designs. It is part of a more comprehensive scheme for the
 [477] protection of the village: the gate posts are of special wood (*Ahrale* or
 614 *modets*, *Celtis Kraussiana*) smeared with medicines on the day they were
 set up; round the circumference are medicated pegs (*diphaha*) of *Ahrale*,
 the whole being completed by the magic circle drawn by the sister or
 father's sister, if she is still alive, who drags a 'doctored' branch of
 thorny *makhale* (*Zizyphus mucronata*) round the circumference. If this
 is not done by her before the doctor begins his work, it must be done
 subsequently, when the precaution of smearing the soles of her feet with
 medicine is taken lest by entering she 'opens up a way for witches'. The

methods of various doctors are not the same. Sometimes a goat is killed ⁶²¹ and very often one finds at the entrance to a village a stick, 3-4 ft. long, ⁷⁸⁹ on which are the roots of a pigpaw lily (*Hypoxis villosa*) or pieces of skin of the goat that was killed. This 'medicine of the village', some of which ⁸²⁴ is always kept by the owner, is important for curing certain illnesses caused by witches and may be eaten with the firstfruits. Every year the village needs to be 'awakened' (*ke duma mame*) by the renewal of these protective medicines, a process which Rapaka carries out naked at dead of night by sprinkling round the hedge certain medicines, an ingredient of which is river or sea sand. The river sand has the property of making the village appear as an expanse of water before the eyes of the sorcerer, who thereupon concludes that he has come to the wrong place. A village may have no visible hedge, but the invisible, charmed enclosure is never absent.

On passing through the gate you find yourself in the *Akvo*, an open ⁸⁴⁷ space, in which there is a hearth. Hardly have you seated yourself on one of the sprawling, spider-like stools of forked branches that are ranged around it than Raulaka himself, who has been expecting you, comes forward. He sits down and, inclining his body to the left, claps his hands, saying, 'Ndim duma' ('Male lion'). He asks after your health, politely inquires about the journey, and pleasantries are exchanged. According to strict etiquette, he ought to have taken his visitors straight to the chief hut, where guests are received, but he knows you wish to be shown over the village, and perhaps that is why he lingers with you in the *Akvo*. A woman passes, bends both knees in a curtsy and inclines the head, passing one palm slowly over the other, a manner of greeting usual to women; then goes slowly on her way. Soon afterwards, you are overpowered by a most offensive smell. You turn round and discover that she has opened ⁸⁵¹ up a grain pit, from the roomy interior of which a small boy, who has let himself in through the narrow neck, is handing out dishfuls of brownish-coloured mealies. Dampness has entered and spoilt the mealies, but the process has not gone far enough to make them uneatable. They are called *madumi* and, though the smell may be unpleasant, there are many who, at least as a change of diet, prefer food made of them to that of ordinary mealies. ⁸⁶¹ Many people are already inquiring whether the owner is willing to exchange them. Dotted about the *Akvo* are other pits which can be located by means of a stick, for each is covered with a large, flat stone sealed down with mud. The *Akvo* is the place where the men and boys ⁸⁶¹ of the village sit, and where cases may be heard; but it is also the playground of the children. Often when children worry their mothers by shouting or playing in the courtyards, they are told, 'Run away and play in the *Akvo*; this is not your playground.' Many villages to-day have no *Akvo*; they are too small to need one or, where there is a much-neglected space for it, it is not used at all, especially when the men are away at work in town.

To the left of the *Akvo* are a small cattle kraal with wire fence, an ⁴¹⁷ enclosure for goats, and another with a roof for donkeys. Only a few ²³¹ villages have cattle at all; but, for most of those that have, a kraal outside the village made of rough poles serves now that there is no longer any

or cold in winter. The veranda of the sleeping hut is used for storage. Here are pots of all sizes, many with lids glued down with dung, calabashes, sacks of corn on stands, medicinal roots, perhaps an old plough, a small grain basket on an inverted tripod of sticks, and a bag of reed pipes for dancing.

The contrast between sleeping and cooking huts is marked: whereas the former is relatively empty, cool and clean, the kitchen hut is generally rather untidy and, when a fire is burning, full of smoke. This is the domain of the housewife. Here are her cooking utensils—pots, baskets, wooden dishes, dishes of white enamel. At first the smoke deters you from entering, but the woman and her children sitting there appear to be quite at ease, so you summon up courage and go in. You splutter at first and your eyes water, but soon you grow accustomed to the atmosphere. You glance up at the unplastered roof and find it black from the smoke of many years. It is the home of countless cockroaches. Stuck in it are ears of corn and mealie cobs kept for seed, and many other articles, such as a cupping horn, some medicinal roots, some old arrows, and axe and spear of Sutha-worked iron kept as religious objects. On a platform of wood, out of the reach of white termites, are several bags of nuts and mealie, while a handbroom of asparagus fern lying near the hearth in the centre comes in useful from time to time for sweeping all the dirt into the fireplace. In this hut women sit at night; grandmothers sleep here with the children; here children are born and here they are often fed; here people lie when ill and here too they die.

[35] A chair, native-made but after the European fashion, with seat of strips of thong, has been placed for you in a shady spot in the chief wife's courtyard. To be perched so high above ground when every one else sits on the floor is distinctly uncomfortable and out of place, but, in deference to the hospitality of your host in according you the honour of a chair, you feel you must occupy it. Four or five small, pot-bellied urchins with dirty noses range themselves near you to watch more closely the features and clothes of the European. One softly points out your peculiar nose to a companion, another comments on your shoes; altogether they find you and your ways absorbing. One small child holds aloof, screaming with fear when the rest try to force him to come near. With her back to the sun, a woman kneels beside a large pot of boiling water, deftly twirling a wooden twirler between her palms. Every now and then she stoops to add a little of the fine, white mealie meal beside her by means of a ladle of calabash, for this is the first stage in the making of *umuso*, cakes of thick meal, their staple food. The twirling prevents the formation of lumps. When the mixture becomes too thick for the twirler, a large, flat, wooden spoon is used with both hands. An aged and wrinkled old woman, mother-in-law of the one who is cooking, arrives from her garden with a basket on her head filled with the young leaves and male flowers of the pumpkin and three or four fresh cobs of mealies. The leaves and flowers are for relish for the meal; the cobs of maize she roasts in the fire for her grandchildren. She sits down, feet straight before her, and begins slowly to pull off the rough outer covering from the stalk of each leaf; it is then broken into two or three pieces and placed in a small, wide-mouthed pot.

Cooking the morning meal is a long-draw-out process, requiring from 252 two to three hours, for not only does water take a long time to boil in these earthen pots over a slow fire, but everything is done in a leisurely manner. While the meal is being cooked, the children and the women themselves roast mealies or monkey nuts, or sit about the courtyard eating sugar cane, for it is summer, the time when there is plenty. The old woman is now roasting some shelled monkey nuts on a potsherd; these she will stamp fine and add to the relish to give it additional flavouring.

A comely girl of about fourteen enters with a large gourd of water on her 576 head, which a friend helps her to put down. 'Mukhadi uwe,' calls out her mother. 'Mafwya,' says the girl, a polite reply or formal answering phrase 563 by which you know at once that she belongs to the royal group, for each group has its own distinguishing answering praise-title. 'Get ready the plates. I shall be dishing up soon.' Mukhadi goes into the huts and collects 715 five dishes—three gourds and two wooden plates—in which are the remains of the previous meal. The remains are carefully set aside to be used for making light beer (*mohadu*), for food is never wasted; then the dishes are scoured by means of powdered sandstone and stood in a row in the 273 sun to dry. 247

In a neighbouring courtyard a grandmother begins feeding a two- 853 months-old baby with thick gruel of sprouted corn. She begins by washing its face, then, cupping her left hand filled with gruel before its mouth, she pushes in the food with a finger of the right hand. Splutterings and gurglings are of no avail till Granny has decided it has had enough. This novel procedure is followed from the day of birth as a supplement to mother's milk. After its meal comes its daily bath. The baby is held 854 over a large potsherd of warm water and washed with a little soap, special care being taken to clean the head and eyes. The baby wriggles and cries; the sherd has jagged edges; the European onlooker fears that at any moment the child may slip out of the woman's hands; but she is skilled and experienced in the handling of infants, and nothing untoward occurs. After being air-dried, the baby's body is anointed with vaseline, an easy substitute for the butter fat of old. In the meantime two boys 308 arrive, one with a large cock under his arm. They are sorry to have taken so long, but, when they looked for a fowl, only the fowls of their neighbours could be seen; their own were nowhere to be found. Your hostess is about to have it killed, but you decide you would prefer to taste native relish, so you give instructions that it is to be left on the hut veranda with legs tied together.

The woman of the *mushe* has lifted her pot off the fire and is beginning 264 to dish up. Smoothing down the porridge with her wooden spoon, she skilfully scoops out a spoonful, which she carefully lays on one of the platters. The result is a neat cake of porridge over which a smooth, outer skin very rapidly forms. A cake is placed in each of the dishes before a second is added, till there are four or five on each. A Lovedu housewife is very particular about the manner in which she dishes up food, for untidy-looking cakes with jagged edges give one the reputation of slovenliness. The Lovedu pride themselves on their cleanliness with food; porridge must be white, with no suspicion of a foreign object. When a

A PICTURE OF EVERYDAY THINGS

pot of beer, decorated in a red chevron pattern, brimming with shining white bubbles at the mouth. A well-scoured basket with four beer-cups is placed beside it. The woman crawls on her knees in the presence of the guests, as is the custom. Turning to his neighbour, the host says, 'Here is a little water in honour of my good friend, headman Raselaka, and his visitor.' The man, turning to his neighbour, says, 'You heard the words of your host!' and he in turn repeats the message to Raselaka himself, who returns thanks for the honour. His thanks are similarly repeated (*ku noma*) till they reach the host, and the dishing-up begins. The host is given the first cup to drink, in accordance with Native etiquette, then Raselaka and his friend are served, the European, as an honour, being given a rounded calabash placed in a small flat basket. The group in the hut is small, so no waiter is needed. Two women form part of the select company. When the beer has sunk to the last dregs, the server says, 'The beer is finished,' whereupon all present *loba* (greet) with a long-drawn-out 'Ndoonnnnnnn.' The pot is turned upside down and emptied of the dregs, which are drunk by some one in the company. Such are the formalities of beer-drinking.

The sun has sunk low in the western horizon when you wend your way²³¹ back to the village. The herdboys, with whistles and cries, are bringing⁹⁵⁷ home the cattle, goats, and donkeys. Two of them, one on an ox, one on a donkey, are having a race on the last level piece of ground near home. Others carry bundles of wood under their arms for the *Akros* fire. Suddenly you hear the ululations of beer carriers as a party of ten women⁴³¹ carrying calabashes, resting in baskets half-filled with grain, comes⁶⁰⁶ towards you. What beer is this? Are these not the in-laws of *Pkēla*, who lives in the village next to yours? True enough, they are bringing *Akirula* beer to their *tusi* (bridegroom), who married their daughter. When the women in the village see them, they, too, begin their cries of joy, accompanied by a few dancing steps (*hu pchela*); one of them even relieves a carrier of her burden and carries it for her to the hut of the son-in-law. Having set down their pots, the carriers begin dancing about, singing, '*Mushiji kbi le; gi y'a shwa ga nama*' (I don't eat blackjacks; I'm going to have relish of meat), in anticipation of the goat that the receiver is by custom bound to kill for them on such an occasion. He has in addition to give them a goat and 10s. to take back in recognition of their gift. If he has no goat, he may give them £1 in all instead. Hence the beer which the relatives of a woman send to their son-in-law each year or every few years, when they are short of corn, is really an exchange of gifts to maintain good relations. In addition, when the in-laws need anything, such as cattle or food, they may make beer and ask their *tusi*, who cannot easily refuse. Immediately after their arrival, the carriers are given a pot of beer from that which they have brought. But, since your capacity for beer is more limited than that of your host, you decide you must go back to the village, as it is getting late.

Every one is converging homewards. Some women are coming with 482
paraffin tins or pots of water on their heads; these four-gallon tins are
much liked for their lightness, but the dampness of the climate soon rusts
holes into them. Those coming from the fields bring with them baskets

482 of pumpkins and green mealies for the evening meal. One woman, carrying a bundle of sugar-cane, is being tormented by two men who, despite her obvious unwillingness to give them any of it, are helping themselves; for people are thought to have a sort of right to picked sugar-cane, which is not a food, but like sweets among ourselves, something pleasing to the palate, to be shared with others. Last of all, and panting heavily, come the young girls who went to fetch wood, each with a heavy load on the head.

252 In the village some of the fires are already lit. One woman is cooking pumpkins for the evening meal. She cuts them into convenient pieces, removes the pips but not the outer skin, then packs them one above the other in a large pot, at the bottom of which there is a little water. A second pot, wide-mouthed and shallow, is inverted over the top, smeared down with a little of the red substance covering the seeds, and the whole allowed to steam over the fire. Green mealies for the evening meal are

[263] cooked in the same manner. Though pumpkin and mealies cooked in this way are very pleasant to eat, the European misses the salt, which is never added. Another woman is preparing some relish to eat with porridge from the morning. It grows darker and darker. The fires, some in the courtyard, some in the huts, but each the centre of a little family group, become a deeper crimson, their cheerful flickering giving one a sense of homeliness and quiet joy. At the courtyard fire where you are sitting, a small girl is cooking her tin of 'food', consisting of five treasured grasshoppers mixed with tomato, which she found growing in the kraal hedge. Every now and then she stirs this brew with a stick. The others are roasting mealies and nuts. A herdboy comes in and lays down beside

431 his grandmother a bird he has killed. She is pleased with the gift, thanks 603 him warmly and praises him by the praise of his name, 'You have done 551 well, Dwagu, you who eat birds and take the heads to give your playmates' ('*U shumile Dwagu wa hu ladinonyana a fia dithoko a fa vasimana*'). If his name had been Boga, the praise would have run, 'Boga, it falls upon people, that thick bush of Mujaji of Muhale' (*Boga le wala vathu lewai la Mujaji a Muhale*); for almost every Lovedu name has its praise, whoever might bear it. Boys are always told by their grandmothers to bring them birds; this they like doing, for there are so many ways in which grandmothers can return the gesture—boiled *njugo* beans, monkey nuts, or sugar-cane being always welcome.

571 In the *khoro*, the three men of the village are sitting by their 521 fire; the herdboys sit at another. The boys are listening to a spirited account of the ways of European farmers given by a boy of fourteen whose good clothes and white sandshoes testify to his having just returned from work. A boy, who has just been called to supper, comes back with a cake of porridge and some relish in his hands to eat it in male company in the *khoro*. Another goes home to eat, but returns later on. The conversation has veered round to the hunting of cane rats with wooden traps, the prevalent sport of this time of the year, when one of the boys comes with some monkey nuts which he has begged from an old woman. These are roasted in their shells in the fire and eaten by the company. Another has managed to obtain some mealies to roast.

in their lives and, where a man marries his mother's brother's daughter, his relatives-in-law are his mother's people. The term *tsxi* (bridegroom) has in Lovedu society a very special connotation. The *tsxi* is greatly honoured by his wife's people. He is given the best of everything. When he visits, he is brought a rush mat to sit upon and beer in a special small calabash or pot as his own. Christians invite the 'bridegroom' or his people to all meat feasts connected with confirmation, baptism, and other ceremonies (heathens have practically no meat feasts), while a mother-in-law never visits at her son-in-law's place without bringing some gift. One day, when Mudiga's wife was on the point of leaving on a visit with beer she had specially brewed to take with her, a *tsxi* (her husband's sister's husband) unexpectedly turned up. So, much to her disgust, her visit had to be put off, 'for one cannot take beer from a *tsxi*'. The honour accorded a *tsxi* is given also to his brothers, own and classificatory, when they visit his relatives-in-law. 602

While a bridegroom is accorded great honour by his relatives-in-law, he has many obligations towards them. When they bring beer, he must slaughter a goat for them and wish them godspeed with another 100 after the feast. If they ask him to help them plough or weed, he must do so. Batamedi, for instance, every year ploughs the field of his wife's grandmother—but they will always entertain him with beer for his trouble. If they have to pay a heavy fine, but have not the wherewithal, they will approach the 'bridegroom', and, if they need more cattle or goats for the marriage of their son, it is again the daughter's husband that they look for help. A friend of ours, a Christian, is even paying for the schooling of his wife's brother. Hence it is that, in spite of the fact that bride-price is more or less fixed within certain limits, it is always said 'bride-price never ends', for a bridegroom can never refuse to help his wife's relatives. He may not even suggest that they are demanding too much, for this would be a breach of good manners reparable only by the handing over of a pardon goat. His only policy is to remain respectful, promise to 'look for' what they require, then later to send a message that he has been unsuccessful, even if he has many goats and they know it. [576] ●

The Lovedu do not have that strict system of lasting avoidances between certain relatives-in-law that is to be found among Nguni, where it involves the use of separate paths by the married women of the village and even proscribes the use of words with syllables contained in the names of the husband or his relatives. Avoidances associated with marriage are, among the Lovedu, found also on other occasions. When a girl comes from her puberty ceremony or a boy from circumcision, he will respectfully greet all his relatives and neither rise nor speak till they *nosa* him by giving him a small gift (6d. or soap or a leg or arm ring). Similarly, when a woman has a new baby, she will cover its face from inmates of the village till they *nosa* her to see it. Similar avoidances, ended by means of a gift, are associated with marriage. 602

As soon as a marriage has been agreed upon, prospective bride and groom avoid each other. They may not be together nor speak to each other and, if by chance they should meet, the bride will cover her face with one of the cloths she wears and turn half aside. Often several 431

with the *vyali*, but beginning rather later when the grass is sufficiently long to be used for the elaborate costumes worn. As in the case of circumcision, the *vyali*, though of national importance, is held locally by various district heads. Only those heads whose ancestors traditionally have held the *vyali* are allowed to hold it, and control is exercised by the fact that permission (literally, *khiso kha mullo*, or firebrand) has to be obtained from the queen by all those wishing to hold a *vyali* by payment of £1. One finds considerable variation from one district to another. In some the *vyali* only is held, their boys having to go elsewhere for initiation into *vuhwera*; in others *vuhwera* is held simultaneously with the *vyali*, while everywhere there are variations in detail according to the doctor responsible for the initiation or the religious habits and desires of the headman holding the initiation. Hence it is that, while at the royal village men of the last regiment (*mangwe*—Leopards) were in 1939 considered too young to be allowed to enter the enclosure of the girls or the place where the old men sit with their wonderful Bird, in many of the districts they were not debarred at all. At the great opening ceremony, when the gods of whoever holds the school are approached for their blessings, those of the royal *vyali* were merely 'cooled' by the spurning of water and a prayer, whereas those of Relela were propitiated with beer brought to the family graves in the depths of the forest. And while at the royal village the initiates were smeared with the stomach contents of a head of cattle killed by being shot, for those of Relela the tail fat of a sheep ritually killed with a medicated knife was used, the stomach contents being mixed with medicine for strengthening the enclosure. The doctor at the royal ceremony carried all the meat of the slaughtered beasts away on donkeys for his own private use, but at Relela the assembled company, including men, ate the meat with medicine. The institution is sufficiently flexible to allow for changes in keeping with modern needs and modern ideas: six European nails were allowed in the construction of the hut of the Bird, a stipulation being made that they should not be visible, loin cloths of material took the place of hide in many areas and other, more far-reaching innovations differentiated the 1939 ceremony from those in olden days. All the 'schools' do not open simultaneously: months after the queen's *vyali* had begun in 1939, district heads were sending to ask permission to hold theirs, while even in the queen's own *vyali* new initiates were joining as much as five months after the opening. In a society where time is unimportant this is not unexpected.

It is not possible here to give a detailed account of *vyali* ceremonial. Only a few of its most important aspects and main functions will be touched upon. Considerable emphasis is laid in the *vyali* on age and rank. The initiates have to be very respectful towards old men and women, greeting them in a special manner (kneeling and clapping with hollowed hands) whenever they pass them. This general pattern is exactly the same as that found in the *vudiga*, the boys' circumcision. The last initiated regiment is to some extent in authority over the novices. Yet the initiates themselves vary in age from small girls of seven or eight to married women. Indeed, in the 1939 *vyali*, held after a lapse of thirty-five years, it was found necessary to divide the initiates into two distinct

695 The procedure to-day involved in witchcraft cases can be set into motion and these cases may be settled by district heads. In short, set rules as to competence do not exist and district heads are left to cope with as much as they can manage.

576 A brief discussion of some quasi-judicial processes will enable us to appreciate better, as it will introduce us to the procedure and spirit of the
627 *khors*. Firstly, there is the method by which especially old women deal
561 with disrespectful or insulting behaviour of younger women. Should one or more young women play a practical joke upon or be disrespectful to an old woman, or playfully 'dance' an infant child, even their own, or prematurely try to make it sit up or walk or scold or beat it, in the presence of the grandmother or of an old woman, their behaviour is regarded as insulting. The conception is that old women in their role as midwives, rather than young mothers, have brought children into the world and the old, not the young, are the guardians of the babes. If one young woman arrogates to herself rights and privileges which belong to the old women, the latter are entitled to take suitable action. The insulted old woman reports to a few of her age-mates and in consultation they decide to punish the age-mates of the young woman resident in the same territorial unit—for example, a district. There is neither 'trial' nor tribunal. The punishment consists of three elements: the age-mates of the young women (say all those who have one baby) must brew beer with which to effect a reconciliation with the older women; in a rite accompanying the beer drink and resembling that used at initiations, the oldest woman canes her immediate junior, who in turn canes the next, and so on, including the culprits; and finally, the culprits are read a lesson as to the iniquity of being disrespectful to their elders.

One day three young married women, in circumstances that implied disrespect, sent three old women a tiny quantity of snuff. The older women immediately fined the younger and vicariously all their age-mates living in the Christian settlement, for they were all residents there. They were told to grind snuff and retribute their wrong with beer. Five days later the twelve young married women of the settlement came to the house of the oldest woman, bringing large quantities of nuts, light beer, pumpkins, and other food; their husbands, in addition, sent a large tin of snuff and these 'gifts' were divided among the old women. Then followed the rite and the warning. On another occasion all the young mothers of a district were fined because one of them had 'danced' its baby in the presence of its grandmother. Likewise, it is said, though we have not seen a case, that the old women may fine a young father and his age-mates, if he forgets their privileges in regard to babies. But we cannot speak of regimental courts, the age-grades are not determined by the 'schools', the responsibility is territorial, and the punishment is 'beer of reconciliation' (largely replaced by food among Christians).

627 The second procedure, that called *hu khumelwa* (to beg pardon, to
691 reconcile), has an enormous province and a profound significance, not only for legal arrangements, but in the whole culture. The procedure uses a *mukhamedi*, the emissary who intervenes on behalf of one of the parties to beg the pardon of the other. Its essence is not humiliation of

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Highveld. When, after many private consultations with diviners, a man decides to make an accusation of witchcraft, he and the accused will *betcha* or lay a wager of money or cattle on the matter, after which, accompanied by a witness, the 'ears of the chief', supplied by the Head Kraal, they set out to consult a far-away smeller-out, nearly always a Shangana-Tonga who lives too far to know anything of the people concerned. Unless the smeller-out is able to give the totems of all members of the party and successfully find an object that has been hidden beforehand, they will pass on to another until some one suitable is found. The verdict of the smeller-out is taken to court where it is always accepted and the guilty party told to pay his wager, the modern counterpart of the death penalty of old. A distinction between murder and accidental homicide is everywhere found in the Lowveld, punishment for the latter being the handing over of a girl to the injured family. She never returns home, nor does any bride-price pass.

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Bantu etiquette, which makes it impossible for a case to be reported to the chief except through a third party, generally among other Sotho tribes one or two specially appointed men, has in the Lowveld given rise to a rather more complicated system whereby each district has its 'mother' at the Head Kraal, through whom reports are made and actions brought. Where a person in one district has a case at the Head Kraal against some one in another district, the 'mother' of the complainant's district will approach the 'mother' of defendant's district to call his 'children' to the court, and various payments are connected with the system. Most of the important men living at or near the Head Kraal are such 'mothers', many having more than one district in their charge.

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FAMILY AND CLAN. There is among Lowveld Sotho no term distinguishing the father's from the mother's side of the family, the word *moloko* being used to denote all relatives whether on the father's side or the mother's; and in practice, whether at weddings or at working parties, both sets of relatives play an equally important, if sometimes different, part. A man inherits his totem and family name from his father, but in his education and social life his mother's people have great influence. Most children spend some years of their life with the

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